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Message Text

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73
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

OES-05 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-01 IO-10 PA-02

USIA-15 PRS-01 /117 W
---------- 084835
P R 072215Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3926
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LIMA

UNCLAS QUITO 0146

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, EC, XM
SUBJECT: ECUADOREAN REACTION TO THE TRADE REFORM ACT

1. FOR THE PAST FIVE DAYS, MAJOR ECUADOREAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE GIVEN HEADLINE TREATMENT ON FRONT PAGES TO THE DEVELOPMENTS SURROUNDING SIGNING OF THE TRADE REFORM ACT OF 1974. TAKEN BY THEMSELVES, THE HEADLINES WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INFLAMMATORY, BUT COMBINED WITH OTHER NEWS AGAINST WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN JUXTAPOSED, THE PICTURE THAT EMERGED WAS UNDENIABLY UNFAVOR-ABLE. THOSE OTHER STORIES INCLUDE ROBERT TUCKER'S ARTICLE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST THAT THE US MIGHT CONSIDER MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST TO CONTINUE THE SUPPLY OF OIL; REPORTING ON THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT THAT ALTHOUGH SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE EXTREME, HE WOULD NOT RULE IT OUT, AND THEN THE WHITE HOUSE CONFIRMATION THAT THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT REFLECTED THE PRESIDENT'S THINKING. THIS HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY STORIES FROM ALGERIA ("HOUARI BOUMEDIENNE
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SAID THAT PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES WOULD DESTROY

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THEIR INSTALLATIONS IF THEY WERE ATTACKED BY OTHER COUNTRIES...") AND ELSEWHERE IN A SIMILAR VEIN. WHETHER TO MAKE A POINT OR NOT, THESE WERE ACCOMPANIED BY REPORTAGE AND PICTURES OF THE CONVICTION OF FOUR WATERGATE DEFENDANTS, "FORMER HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT".

2. SIMULTANEOUSLY, HEADLINES HAVE REPORTED THE GATHERING BY ECUADOR OF SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR ITS PLIGHT AS A SMALL, IMPOVERISHED, PRIMARY-PRODUCTS PRODUCER BEING TROD UPON BY THE MIGHTIEST INDUSTRIAL POWER IN THE WORLD, WHICH IS MADE OUT TO APPEAR BENT ON KEEPING ECUADOR A PRIMARY-PRODUCTS PRODUCER. JANUARY 5TH'S EL COMERCIO RAN THE HEADLINE "ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA FORM A COMMON FRONT" (AGAINST THE TRADE REFORM ACT). ITS HEADLINE ON JANUARY 6TH WAS "NEW AMERICAN LAW IS A SERIOUS BLOW TO ARGENTINE COMMERCE". ON JANUARY 7TH, "PERU JOINS ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA AGAINST THE AMERICAN TRADE LAW". EL TIEMPO'S REPORTING HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MORE POINTED; THUS ON JANUARY 4TH "THE US DISCRIMINATES AGAINST ECUADOR", ON JANUARY 5TH A DOUBLE HEADLINE, "DEFIANT REPLY BY LIBYA AND IRAN AGAINST KISSINGER'S THREAT" AND "PETROLEUM IS A DOUBLED-EDGED SWORD: FIDEL CASTRO". ON JANUARY 6TH "US TRADE LAW DAMAGES TIES WITH LATIN AMERICA", AND ON THE 7TH "VENEZUELA REACTS AGAINST US THREATS".

3. THERE HAS ONLY BEEN ONE EDITORIAL ON THE MATTER IN THE QUITO PAPERS, BUT BOTH EL COMERCIO AND EL TIEMPO HAVE A HABIT OF LETTING THEIR EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS SPEAK FOR THEM -- AND THE LATTER HAVE BAD A FIELD DAY, MANIFESTING CONSIDERABLE CYNICISM ABOUT THE SINCERITY OF US RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE OFFENDING (ANTI-OPEC) PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE REFORM ACT. ONE CARTOON SHOWS THE PRESIDENT SIGNING THE BILL, WHILE REMOVING A FACE MASK SHEDDING TEARS (OUR REGRET AT CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL), BUT A SMILING FACE BEHIND, AS THOUGH GLAD TO BE DEALING OPEC THE SHIV. A SECOND CARTOON SHOWS FORD SIGNING THE BILL, EXPRESSING DOUBTS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS, BUT HOLDING A THREATENING GUN IN THE OTHER HAND. A THIRD CARTOON SHOWS UNCLE SAM WITH A MACHINE GUN, DRESSED A A UNCLASSIFIED

THUG, AROUND A CORNER, AS AN UNSUSPECTING ARAB APPROACHES WITH A BARREL OF OIL: "YOUR BARREL OR YOUR LIFE", IN REFERENCE TO THREATS OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. THE SOLITARY EDITORIAL, IN EL COMERCIO OF JANUARY 6TH, IS ENTITLED "ECONOMIC AGGRESSION", AND DESCRIBES THE US CONGRES AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PLUTOCRATIC AND MONOPOLISTIC

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BUSINESS, WHICH HAS RETURNED TO (THE BAD OLD DAYS OF) THREATS, SANCTIONS, AND COERCION AGAINST THE UNDER-DEVELOPED WORLD. IT REVIEWS THE HOPES THAT WERE RAISED AT TLATELOLCO, FOR A "NEW DIALOGUE", AND CONCLUDES THAT SUCH A GENUINE PARTNERSHIP OF INTERESTS WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE SO LONG AS INTERESTS IN THE UNITED STATES COMPEL ITS GOVERNMENT TO REVERT TO THE TACTICS OF ECONOMIC AGGRESSION AND POLITICAL PRESSURE. BUT IT ENDS ON A DECIDEDLY HOPEFUL NOTE, A BUOYANT C MAJOR, DEVOID OF THE CYNNICISM AND PESSIMISM EXPRESSED ELSEWHERE: "THE PROBLEM IS ONE WHICH CONCERNS US ALL. IT IS NECESSARY TO FORM A COMMON FRONT, NOT AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, BUT RATHER IN DEFENSE OF OUR INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTIES AND NATURAL RESOURCES. THE OAS, IN SURMOUNTING THE CRISIS WHICH CONFRONTS IT, CAN BE THE INSTRUMENT WHICH HELPS TO LIMIT ASPERITY, RESTORE SENSIBILITY, AND THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH PORTIONS OF THE HEMISPHERE WHICH, BECAUSE OF THE IMPERATIVES OF GEOPOLITICS, MUST LEARN TO LIVE WITH EACH OTHER ON A BASIS OF RECIPROCAL RESPECT AND EQUITABLE AND JUST COOPERATION. THERE IS NO OTHER POSSIBLE ATTITUDE; THERE IS NO OTHER POSSIBLE ROAD." HEMENWAY

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